



NICOLE CONNOLLY, PHD
LICENSED PSYCHOLOGIST

Informed Consent for Psychotherapy

The therapeutic relationship is unique in that it is a highly personal and at the same time, a contractual agreement. Given this, it is important for us to reach a clear understanding about how our relationship will work, and what each of us can expect. This consent will provide a clear framework for our work together. Feel free to discuss any of this with me. Please read and indicate that you have reviewed this information and agree to it by filling in the checkbox at the end of this document.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES:

Psychotherapy is not easily described in general statements. It varies depending on the personalities of the psychologist and patient, and the particular problems you bring forward. Participation in therapy can result in a number of benefits to you, including improving interpersonal relationships and resolution of the specific concerns that led you to seek therapy. Working toward these benefits, however, requires effort on your part. In order for the therapy to be most successful, you will have to work on things we talk about both during our sessions and at home.

There are many different methods I may use to deal with the problems that you hope to address. The specific approach is chosen based on the issues at hand and my assessment of what will best meet your needs. These approaches include, but are not limited to, behavioral, cognitive-behavioral, cognitive, psychodynamic, existential, system/family, developmental (adult, child, family), humanistic or psycho-educational. I do NOT provide custody recommendations, medication or prescription recommendations, or legal advice, as these activities do not fall within my scope of practice.

Psychotherapy can have benefits and risks. Since therapy often involves discussing unpleasant aspects of your life, you may experience uncomfortable feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, loneliness, and helplessness. I may challenge some of your assumptions or perceptions or propose different ways of looking at, thinking about, or handling situations, which can cause you to feel very upset, angry, depressed, challenged, or disappointed. Attempting to resolve issues that brought you to therapy in the first place, such as personal or interpersonal relationships, may result in changes that were not originally intended. Psychotherapy may result in decisions about changing behaviors, employment, substance use, schooling, housing, or relationships. Sometimes a decision that is positive for one family member is viewed quite negatively by another family member. Change will sometimes be easy and swift, but more often it will be slow and even frustrating. On the other hand, psychotherapy has also been shown to have benefits for people who go through it. Therapy often leads to better relationships, solutions to specific problems, and significant reductions in feelings of distress. However, there is no guarantee that psychotherapy will yield positive or intended results.

Our first few sessions will involve an evaluation of your needs. By the end of the evaluation, I will be able to offer you some first impressions of what our work will include and a treatment plan to follow, if you decide to continue with therapy. You should evaluate this information along with your own opinions of whether you feel comfortable working with me. Therapy involves a large commitment of time, money, and energy, so you should be very careful about the therapist you select. If you have questions about my procedures, we should discuss them whenever they arise. If your doubts persist, I will be happy to help you set up a meeting with another mental health professional for a second opinion.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

In general, the privacy of all communications between a client and a psychologist is protected by law, and I can only release information about our work to others with your written permission.

There are some situations in which I am legally obligated to take action to protect others from harm, even if I have to reveal some information about a client's treatment. Under California law, I am obligated to report confidential information to the appropriate government agencies or law enforcement personnel in the following cases:

- 1.If I have a reasonable suspicion that a child is being neglected or abused, I am required to file a report with Child Protective Services.
- 2.If I have a reasonable suspicion that an elderly adult or a dependent adult is being neglected or abused, I am required to file a report with Adult Protective Services.
- 3.If I have reason to believe that you pose significant harm to yourself or to the person or property of another person, I may be obligated to take protective actions. These actions may include notifying the potential victim, contacting law enforcement personnel, or seeking hospitalization for you.
- 4.If you threaten to harm yourself, I may be obligated to seek hospitalization or contact family members or others who can help provide protection.

It is also important to be aware that in certain situations, I may be compelled to release your records by court order or for use in judicial or administrative hearings. In most legal proceedings, you have the right to prevent me from providing any information about your treatment. However, in some proceedings, such as those involving child custody and those in which your emotional condition is an important issue, a judge may order my testimony if he/she determines that the issues demand it. In those situations, I must comply with a court order to release records of your treatment.

I may occasionally find it helpful to consult other professionals about a case. During a consultation, I make every effort to avoid revealing the identity of my patient. The consultant is also legally bound to keep the information confidential. If you don't object, I will not tell you about these consultations unless I feel that it is important to our work together.

In couple and family therapy, or when different family members are seen individually, even over a period of time, confidentiality and privilege do not apply between the couple or among family members, unless otherwise agreed upon. I will use my clinical judgment when revealing such

information. I will not release records to any outside party unless authorized to do so by all adult parties who were part of the family therapy, couple therapy or other treatment that involved more than one adult client.

If we see each other accidentally outside of the therapy office, I will not acknowledge you first. Your right to privacy and confidentiality is of the utmost importance to me, and I do not wish to jeopardize your privacy. However, if you acknowledge me first, I will be more than happy to speak briefly with you, but feel it appropriate not to engage in any lengthy discussions in public or outside of the therapy office.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT:

BY SIGNING BELOW I AM AGREEING THAT I HAVE READ, UNDERSTOOD AND AGREE TO THE ITEMS CONTAINED IN THIS DOCUMENT. BY SIGNING, I UNDERSTAND THAT I AM GIVING MY CONSENT TO BE TREATED BY NICOLE CONNOLLY, PH.D. AND/OR FOR MY CHILD TO BE TREATED BY NICOLE CONNOLLY, PH.D.

Patient Signature

Date

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature

Date

Psychotherapist Signature

Date